

THE STATUS OF *HELEODYTES AFFINIS*.

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IN a short paper on the *Heleodytes* of Southern and Lower California, published in 'The Auk' for July, 1894 (XI, pp. 210-214) I suggested the advisability of reducing the species *affinis* to the rank of a subspecies of *brunneicapillus*. Since the paper was published I have secured a further series of the Lower California birds, as well as a number of equally interesting specimens from along the border in southern San Diego County, California, all of which have strengthened my previously expressed conviction that the Cape St. Lucas bird was but a subspecies of the northern *brunneicapillus*, connected through the northern half of the peninsula by *bryanti*.

Winter birds from San Fernando have the dark markings of the lower parts somewhat hidden by the light tips of the fresh unworn feathers and were mentioned in my paper on the *Heleodytes* (l. c.) as being rather nearer *affinis* than *bryanti*. However, a series of spring and summer birds taken at a later date prove the Cactus Wrens of that region to be much nearer *bryanti*. How much farther south that race extends I am, as yet, unable to say, but the characteristics of my southern skins all point toward an intergradation with *affinis* at a point at no great distance south of San Fernando. Therefore the St. Lucas Cactus Wren should stand as *Heleodytes brunneicapillus affinis*.

The Cactus Wrens collected by Dr. E. A. Mearns between the Colorado River and Campo, along the Mexican boundary, are practically indistinguishable from birds from Arizona, New Mexico and Texas but are easily separated from those taken along the coast of San Diego County, by the spotting of the lower parts, which is always linear in the inland form and more ovate or rounded in coast specimens. The tail feathers of the eastern specimens are seldom barred beyond the lateral feathers, but usually more or less barred throughout in those from west of the Cuyamaca Mountains. Should the type of Lafresnaye's *brunneicapillus* prove to have been obtained in California it will probably be necessary to recognize the eastern bird as a separate race, as suggested in my notes on the species (l. c.).